

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 961

By Camper

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the members of the Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church upon the grand opening of their new sanctuary.

WHEREAS, the churches of Tennessee are crucial elements contributing to the social and spiritual health of our State, and the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize significant milestones in the lives of those communities of faith; and

WHEREAS, the good people of the Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church comprise one such congregation and recently opened a beautiful new sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the theme, “Honoring the Past—Rebuilding the Future,” this body of believers celebrated the grand opening of their exquisite house of faith on March 24, 2012, at a Black Tie Gala with Pastor Bartholomew Orr of Brown Missionary Baptist Church delivering the keynote address; and

WHEREAS, as the oldest African-American Baptist Church in Collierville, this venerable religious institution traces its rich history to 1860, when a small group of slaves began holding prayer meetings together in secret; and

WHEREAS, once a tiny community of faith, the Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church has continued to flourish and increase its membership over the years; and

WHEREAS, throughout its storied history, the thriving congregation has continued expanding and remodeling their facilities, including adding an indoor baptismal pool, installing an intercom system and new sound equipment, completing an impressive educational building, and adding stained glass windows; and

WHEREAS, over the course of its existence, this extraordinary congregation has been blessed with spiritual leadership from a great many preachers who have faithfully guided the church, including Pastors Utterback, Williams, Clemons, McDowens, Mitchell, Ribbons, Mabon,

Campbell, Fowler, Nabors, Manning, Dammonds, Ingrams, Anderson, Bell, Tyler, Crutcher, Sandridge, Payne, Bumpus, and Hughes; and

WHEREAS, since 2007, Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church has enjoyed the sage pastoral guidance of LaDaryl Odum, who, in the course of his first year at the helm, had infused a renewed sense of passion and ignited a fire into the flock, increasing the youth participation, adding fifty new members, launching a new class for potential Deacons, and updating the current facilities; and

WHEREAS, with congregational input and expectant prayer, this forward-thinking leader launched a new building committee and sought out town officials for the necessary requirements to construct a new worship facility; and

WHEREAS, on a bittersweet afternoon, the flock held its last service at the old building on July 25, 2010, and temporarily moved their meetings to the Collierville United Methodist Church; and

WHEREAS, after a long and intensive process, the construction crew was finally able to break ground on September 13, 2010, and today the members of Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church are able to join together in Spirit and Truth, praising the Almighty for his numerous blessings in their magnificent, new sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, a powerful tool in the service of the Kingdom of God, the Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church is one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for more than 150 years, serving as a bastion of faith and outreach to the people of Collierville, the surrounding area, and the world; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we join in celebrating the grand opening of Saint Mark Missionary Baptist Church's new sanctuary, thank the good people of this remarkable congregation and their

ministers for their notable service to their Lord and the State of Tennessee, and wish them much continued success and happiness in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.